

SOCIAL ACTION



Child Welfare



December 15, 1936

SOCIAL ACTION

National Organ of the Council for Social Action

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Child Welfare

Child Labor Sunday: January 31

"God, if you got time, please put a garbage-pail somewhere I can find it with an ole roller skate inside. I'll be awful good if you do." These were the words of little Ruby Mayer's prayer. The Relief Lady could be looked to for such things as food, coal, and funerals. But such marvelous things as an occasional garbage-pail with an old discarded roller skate in it, well, only God could manage that.

Ruby is only one. There are about 7,000,000 other American children in destitute families dependent upon public relief. That's a lot of children living precariously on the edge of life's physical and spiritual abysses. Martha Gellhorn tells their pitiful stories in *The Trouble I've Seen*.

A Million Babies Born to Poverty

In *Co-op* Upton Sinclair writes of a Louisiana sharecropper's family who drove into California in a rickety Ford. The father, begging food in a restaurant, is arrested. Meanwhile his wife, waiting, waiting for him to return, helplessly alone in strange surroundings, gives birth to her child in a nearby store to which kind passers-by had hurried her. It is the sort of story which runs up the sales of newspapers. And the big publicity which the family received led to their being literally showered with gifts.

"That was the way with the American people," comments the author. "A million babies were born to poverty every

year, and no one gave a thought to it; but let one case get into the papers, and catch people's fancy and touch their hearts. . . ."

Just so. Thousands upon thousands of children in America lack the elemental necessities of life. They never have a chance. Our own children are secure, as secure as love and a fairly comfortable income can make them. So are the children on our street. But beyond that we rarely see. Oh, an occasional ragged newsboy, or a dirty baby on a back street. But not the 7,000,000 children on relief, or the 8,000,000 children under 17 years of age who show effects of malnutrition, inadequate housing and too scanty medical care, or the 10,000,000 children who are physically and mentally handicapped. They don't happen to live on our street. Life is so arranged these days that the poor live pretty well out of our sight, and we don't see them.

But let's see what we can, now.

Diet and Health

Are the children of America adequately nourished?

In 1934 the U. S. Department of Agriculture made a study of milk consumption by 28,966 families, in 59 cities. Milk consumption is a good index to the soundness of a family's diet.

The Department estimates the minimum weekly requirement, on a family basis, to be 3 quarts of milk per person per week. Adults would of course consume less than that, children more; but the consumption of milk by adults and children together in any single family should come to that figure. But in how many families is this the case? The Department found that as many as *66 per cent of the families investigated used less than this minimum amount of milk.* That means that the

UNDERNOURISHMENT IN AMERICAN FAMILIES

BIRMINGHAM



NEW ORLEANS



Each family group represents 10% of the families studied by Labor Department. Black—undernourished.

In Birmingham 43% of the families studied did not spend enough to buy even the adequate diet at minimum cost; in New Orleans, 31%. Monthly Labor Review, April, 1936, page 894.

Courtesy of the Monthly Survey of Business

children in these homes were consuming too little of an essential food.

Why?

What You Should Spend on Food

In 1931 the U. S. Children's Bureau and the Bureau of Home Economics estimated that *a family of two adults and three children should have from \$7.50 to \$10 a week to spend on food alone*, in order to assure an adequate diet at minimum cost.

On food alone! Ridiculous to tell that to families on relief. Work relief earnings for the entire country averaged only \$50 per month per family, in October 1936. In 25 states earnings were lower than this average of approximately \$12 per week—an amount which is not available for food but has to cover all items of family expense: food, rent, clothing, and so forth. How can families on relief maintain minimum diet standards on this level of income?

In comparison with families on relief, those families whose members are employed are well off. Yet not well enough off. The average weekly earnings for all wage-earners, October

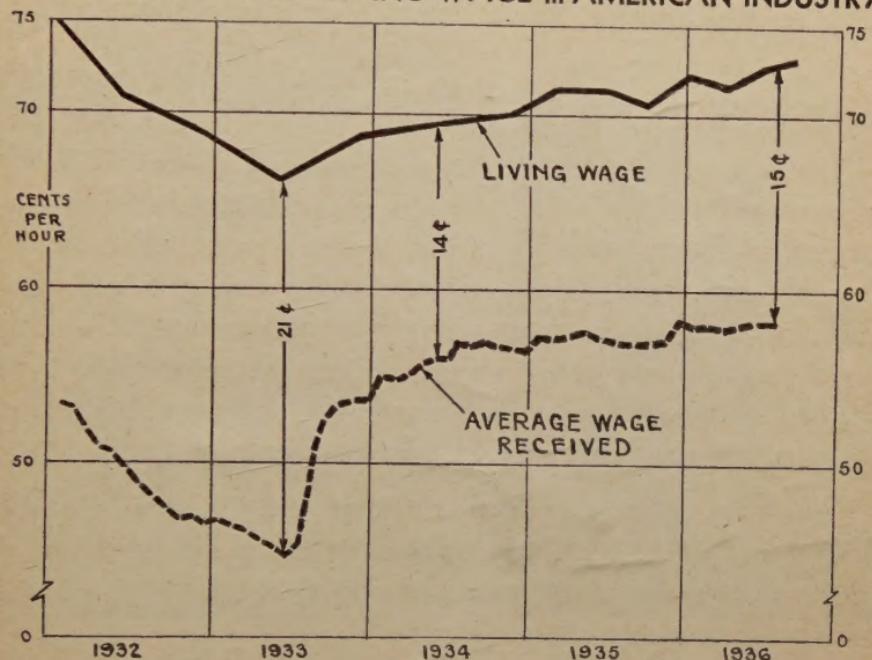
1936, was \$25.50—\$1,326 a year. This is an inadequate income. Social workers have put minimum budget needs for "health and decency" variously at from \$1,300 to \$1,800. Dr. Mordecai Ezekiel, economist and statistician, formerly Economic Advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture, has estimated that a family's income should be \$2,500 a year to ensure a moderately full life. President William Green, of the American Federation of Labor, calls for a standard of \$3,600. But whatever figure we choose, *the average American worker's family does not receive an income large enough to assure his family an adequate diet.*

We Need More "Protective" Foods

Children whose fathers are on relief do not have *minimum* standards of diet. Most children whose fathers are wage-earners do not have *adequate* standards of diet. The U. S. Bureau of Economics, on the basis of its investigation of food budgets, states that families with modest incomes (\$1,500 to \$2,500) ought to be buying a larger quantity of certain kinds of food: one-third more vegetables, citrus fruits, eggs, and butter; one-fourth more lean meat; one-fifth more milk. The Bureau finds that poorer groups (below \$1,500) ought to be consuming twice as much as they now are of vegetables, fruits, and butter.

Is it that these families are dividing their budgets improperly, foolishly spending too much for non-food items? Or is it that their limited income simply does not permit them to buy more food, or more of the right food? The real answer is: inadequate incomes. *The chief cause of under-nourishment will be removed when the world's great wealth is more equitably shared.*

AVERAGE WAGE and LIVING WAGE in AMERICAN INDUSTRY



The average hourly wage paid in American industry in March, 1933, was 21 cents below the minimum necessary to support a family of 4. By June, 1934, this difference had been reduced to 14 cents but by the summer of 1936 it had increased again to 15 cents. (Source: Average Wages. Computed from U. S. Labor Department figures. Living Wage: Calculated from Professor Nystrom's estimate, assuming that wage earner works 40 hours every week.)

Courtesy of the Monthly Survey of Business

New York City has, since 1927, kept records showing the extent of malnutrition among school entrants. In that year 13.5 per cent of all school children were malnourished. The percentage remained constant until 1930, when it rose to 16.1 per cent. In 1932 it stood at 21.1 per cent, but, with more adequate relief provisions since then, it has now fallen to 18.1 per cent—a figure, however, higher than that of 1927.

Is this condition true only in a large city? Unfortunately not. Surveys in other states have uncovered conditions even worse than this. In 1933 in Kansas, 25 per cent of 38,000 children who were examined were found to be malnourished.

A similar survey in West Virginia revealed the fact that 27 per cent of the children were at least 10 per cent underweight.

Low Incomes and High Sickness Rates

The U. S. Public Health Service found, in studies made over the period 1929-33, that *there is a consistent correlation between economic status and the sickness rate: the lower the income, the higher the illness rate.* The reason for increased sickness rates in poorer families is to be seen in the inability of such families to buy "protective" foods. The Service concluded that inadequate diets made for lowered vitality and reduced the resistance of the body to disease.

As Grace Abbott, former chief of the Children's Bureau, stated it: "*Well-filled pay envelopes for the fathers are the first great need of both farm and city children.*"

A Real Home

One half of all American families live today in dwellings below the minimum standards for health and decency which were drawn up in 1912 by the National Conference of Charities and Correction.

The housing for this half of America varies considerably, with as many as 30,000,000 people living in "miserable hovels." In New York City as many as one fourth of the population live in tenements declared illegal since 1902. These tenements have 200,000 dark rooms where daylight never enters. A report released by W.P.A. Administrator Harry L. Hopkins in December 1936 revealed the fact that cotton tenants in the South are living in some of the poorest dwellings in the nation—unpainted four-room frame shacks without screens, and with only primitive sanitation.



Courtesy of the Art Service Project

America still faces the problem of caring for the needs of youth.

A more detailed examination of America's housing facilities shows the following lack of modern equipment:

- 25% of all families had no water supply in their homes
- 32% had no electricity
- 43% had no bathrooms
- 55% had no gas ranges
- 56% had no telephones
- 67% had no furnaces or other heating systems

(Many families in the South, of course, need none.)

Any Kind of a Shack?

Housing may, of course, be irrelevant. It is conceivable that any kind of a shack can be a place of Christian nurture. We know, however, that with bad housing go—lack of sanitation and sickness, crowded living and immorality, unsightly neighborhoods and souls starved of beauty, lack of recreation and

an increase in juvenile delinquency. Children who live in slum dwellings are exposed to conditions which tend to blight and warp personality.

These depression years have been hard on children who have been moved from more comfortable homes into crowded quarters, often moving into homes already occupied by another branch of the family. Homes have been lost to mortgage holders, evictions have been common. Parents have been ridden by discouragement and fear. Little wonder that children, with their security of home threatened, and often lost, should develop nervous disorders, that their school work should become unsatisfactory, that behavior problems should develop.

For the children's sake America must build its people good houses, adequate to their needs, houses which will not be taken from them. The masses of the people on their present incomes cannot provide themselves with adequate housing. Here is where the government must assist, with a federal housing program. But even beyond that is the need of giving people the incomes possible in an "economy of abundance."

Education

According to the 1930 census a larger percentage of children of all ages are attending school than was the case in 1920. This is desirable progress. The following figures show the increase. Of special interest is the fact that not as large a proportion of Negro children, ages 7 to 13, were able to attend school as of white children of the same age.

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS OF SPECIFIED AGES ATTENDING SCHOOL

	7-13 (all)	7-13 (Negro only)	14-15	16-17
1920	90.6%	76.5%	79.9%	42.9%
1930	95.3	87.3	88.8	57.3



Courtesy of the Art Service Project

Extending our school facilities would help us build a resourceful generation of youth.

In every state children are compelled to go to school up to some specified age. If you live in Idaho, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah or Washington, you have to go to school until you are 18 years old. These states have the highest standards. But if you live in three states—Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina—you are not required to attend school beyond the age of 14.

Neither in School Nor at Work

In 1930 nearly three million boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 21 were neither in school nor at work—adrift in their communities. If neither the educational system nor private industry has a place for them, where shall they turn?

Character disintegration breeds in such unoccupied groups who seem not to belong anywhere nor to have a purpose in life.

Granted that the school system is perhaps not obligated to care for youth as old as 21 (although the children of the privileged are often in school until then), certainly our schools ought to provide continued educational opportunities for all boys and girls 16 and 17 years of age. But in 34 states they need not attend school after their sixteenth birthday. Many of them leave school then, or are dismissed from school, and seek work.

But it is hard to find work. Of 5,327 unemployed boys and girls 16 to 17 years old who found their way to the Connecticut State Employment Offices in the year ending November 1934, only 18.5 per cent were placed in jobs. There are at the present time about 5,000,000 young people ages 16 to 24 who are neither at school nor at work.

Expenditures on Schools are Cut

During these depression years, when work was not available to young people who had finished the required years at school, more of them sought to remain in school. The enrolment in high schools increased considerably. Yet during these critical years for youth, school expenses were cut. In 1930 the per capita cost of enrolment was \$90.22. In 1932, it was \$82.76—a cut of 9 per cent.

Most school boards tried to hold expenses at a minimum because of lowered income from taxes. Little building of new or improving of old school buildings was done. The W.P.A. program, however, did help the condition somewhat. Through May 30, 1936 the W.P.A. had bought about \$15,000,000 worth of materials, supplies and equipment for building or improving 6,200 public schools.

In spite of tremendous advances, America still faces the problem of caring for the needs of youth. It is tragic that boys and girls should be dropped out of the school system too early in life, before they have reached a fullness of mind which education can make possible, and when there is no work for them to do. The President's Research Committee on Social Trends, reporting in 1933, came to the conclusion that "*the second decade of life is now the neglected period of childhood.*" We could remedy this situation somewhat by advancing the compulsory school age, and by limiting the labor of boys and girls under 18. This would mean extending our school facilities. It would cost money. But it would be worth the cost, for it would help us build a resourceful generation of youth.

Work

Stories like this one, told by the National Child Labor Committee, are common—"Laura has two older brothers 23 and 21 years of age, but they can't seem to find work. So when the codes (N.R.A.) came to an end, Laura, though she was not yet 15 years old, thought she would try to help. Youth was no handicap, and she quickly found work as finisher in a garment factory where she sews on hooks and removes basting. But her older brothers are still searching for work."

The latest figures for child labor are those of the 1930 census. At that time more than 2,000,000 children between the ages of 10 and 17 were gainfully occupied — one out of every nine children in the country.

They Work Young

But aren't these all *older* children who are employed? No. Look at these figures, noting the percentage who are in the younger age groups:

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL NUMBER EMPLOYED		
Age	1920	1930
10-13	14 per cent	11 per cent
14-15	25 " "	20 " "
16-17	62 " "	69 " "

There has definitely been an improvement since 1920. But altogether too many children are still working, when they should be either in school or at home or in playgrounds.

A further examination of 1930 census figures on children ages 10 to 17 is revealing. Who are working? Where do they work?

Twice as many boys as girls work. The percentage of Negro children working is more than twice the percentage of native white children—a further instance of the general discrimination which exists.

Almost one-half (975,568) of the total number of children gainfully occupied are found in agriculture; one-fourth (466,251) in manufacturing and mechanical industries; one-tenth (209,304) in domestic and personal service; slightly less than one-tenth (187,963) in trade; still less (172,182) in clerical occupations; and the rest in other pursuits.

Since agriculture employs most of the boys and girls, let us first see what is the nature of their work. Do they simply milk the cows and carry in wood?

The Migratory Worker

Among the child agricultural workers the most seriously handicapped is the migratory worker, who moves about with his family following the crops. Often he has no permanent home, leads no settled life, and is out of touch with schools, recreational facilities and healthful surroundings. The labor of the entire family is contracted, higher prices being paid the

largest families. Children are put to work as young as possible, often at the age of eight.

Children also work in the cotton fields. The Children's Bureau found in 1924 that 42 per cent of the white children thus employed began work when less than ten years old, one-fourth when they were eight. Negro children started to work even younger. Children often work in the cotton fields from 8 to 14 hours a day.

Work in the sugar beet fields "is probably the most exhausting work done by children anywhere," declares the Children's Bureau, "because of long hours, strained positions, intense heat, exposure to wet, and the speed required in certain operations." Here children work 11 to 12 hours a day, and probably handle on an average 4 tons of beets and dirt a day in the harvest. In 1933 over 12 per cent of the contracted beet workers were under the age of 16.

Let us look now into non-agricultural areas where children are employed.

Industrial home work employs many children, who help their parents finish garments, and make lampshades, bed-spreads and other articles. In a study made in Chicago in 1934, 7 per cent of the home workers were under 14 years of age.

In the Canneries

Canneries also employ children. In a survey by the Children's Bureau in 1923-26, 560 canneries employing 56,828 were investigated. It was found that 6 per cent of the total number of persons employed were under 16, one-fourth of these being employed illegally. Few of these operated machines; they peeled, cored, sorted, or worked with cans. They



Courtesy of the National Child Labor Committee
Too many children are still working.

had to stand on wet, sloppy floors, in barn-like buildings used only in the canning season.

Studies of newspaper sellers in 17 cities in 1934 revealed that the average age of newsboys was 13. They worked 15½ hours a week. They earned \$1.41—less than 10c. an hour.

Conditions improved between 1920 and 1930. The N.R.A., coming later, helped eliminate some of the worst of child labor. But with the end of the codes, the employment of children increased. Reports from 10 states and 98 cities in other states stated that 8,400 children between the ages of 14 and 15 obtained regular employment during the first 5 months of 1936. This represented a 152 per cent increase over the same period in the previous year.

What Is There to Do?

First, we can work for the ratification of the child labor amendment. In 1916 and again in 1919 federal child labor legislation was passed, only to be declared unconstitutional. If Congress is to enact such laws, power must be granted the federal government by amending the constitution.

Such an amendment passed both branches of Congress in 1924, in the House by a vote of 297 to 69, in the Senate by a vote of 61 to 23. The suggested amendment is merely an enabling act, giving Congress power to legislate. It reads as follows:

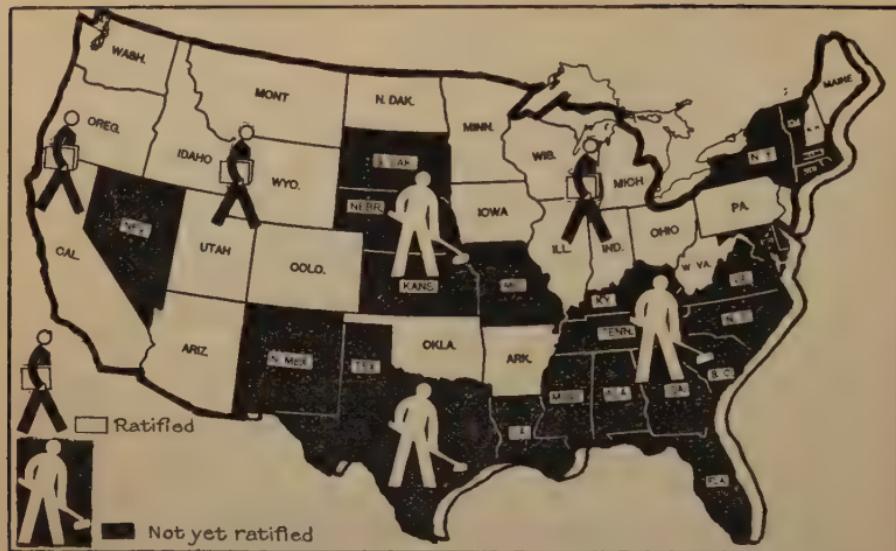
"SECTION 1. The Congress shall have the power to limit, regulate and prohibit the labor of persons under eighteen years of age.

"SECTION 2. The Power of the several states is unimpaired by this article except that the operation of state laws shall be suspended to the extent necessary to give effect to legislation enacted by Congress."

Twenty-four states have ratified this amendment. Twelve more must ratify before it becomes part of the constitution. Legislatures of the following 19 states will consider ratifying the amendment in 1937:

Connecticut	Massachusetts	North Carolina
Delaware	Missouri	Rhode Island
Florida	Nebraska	South Carolina
Georgia	Nevada	South Dakota
Kansas	New Mexico	Tennessee
Maryland	New York	Texas
		Vermont

If you are a citizen of one of these states, write your legislators urging that they vote to ratify the amendment. Federal legis-



Twenty-four states have ratified the National Child Labor Amendment.

lution is needed to end the exploitation of children in industry and agriculture.

In the second place, we can work for improvement in the child labor laws of our own state, especially with respect to hours and working conditions. Here our first task is to discover what the laws of our state actually are. This information can be obtained from the State Department of Labor.

This review of child labor legislation suggests the task that lies before us. How shall we begin?

A Few Concrete Suggestions

These are some of the very simple things we can do:

1. Distribute copies of this issue of SOCIAL ACTION in your church. *Order a supply at once.*

10 or more copies, 7c. each

50 or more copies, 5c. each

2. Plan a program for your young people and your adult classes, for your women's association and your men's club. Preach on child labor.

*You will want our CHILD LABOR PACKET
(25c.) containing study materials, discussion outline, worship service.*

3. Send to the National Child Labor Committee, 419 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y. for child labor posters for your church bulletin board. From them you can rent a new illustrated lecture too.

4. From the National Child Labor Committee find out what organizations in your state are working for child labor laws and the federal child labor amendment. Get in touch with them, and work with them. Attend hearings. Write your legislators.

We cannot end our comments, however, without reminding ourselves of the fundamental fact: There would be no child labor if fathers and other adult members of all families were assured jobs at a living wage.

To think that better state or federal child labor laws is the end of the story is to delude ourselves. We must change the economic system which gives adult workers so little income that their children are forced out into industry and agriculture to supplement or sometimes to provide single-handed the material goods which are needed.

We have come to the time when nature's abundance can be made available to all people. No longer are we in an "economy of scarcity." But under our present economic arrangements that abundance cannot be released. It is at last apparent that those of us who are so concerned about the life abundant for the children must begin to transform our world, so that homes and communities and nations can become centers of Christian love.

Prayer for Child Welfare

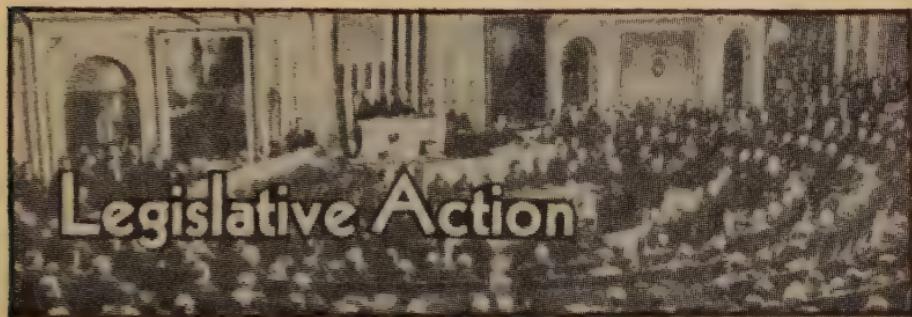
O God, hear us as we pray for all the children of our nation and of the world.

For those especially do we pray who are being brought up in homes where there is no beauty or joy or love; for those who suffer through deprivation, want, and sickness for whom no proper care is offered; for those who suffer in mind and soul through fear and bitterness and strain; for the wayward and those who are misunderstood. In thy mercy restore to them that which they have lacked and that which has been taken from them.

Bless all efforts that are made in behalf of child welfare. Awaken those who are in positions of power and responsibility to a deeper consciousness of the rights and needs of children. Wipe out from the souls of all neglected children the scars of suffering, misery, and fear; give back to them the courage, the confidence, and the untroubled joy which should be theirs.

And grant to all who tend and teach children the love and patient wisdom that they need.

For Jesus sake who gave to children his blessing, and said 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Amen.—Adapted.



While Congress is in session, SOCIAL ACTION will report on legislation. In this issue we shall discuss legislation of interest from the standpoint of peace.

Reciprocal Trade Agreements

The peace movement stands solidly behind the Administration's program of reciprocal trade agreements. It believes that the breaking down of trade barriers, through a lowering of tariffs, is one sure avenue to world peace.

Although the Trade Agreements Act does not expire until June 12, its renewal will be sought in the early weeks of this session. State Department experts place this item near the top of their list of urgent legislation.

Authentic information indicates that despite the election landslide, the President will not find Congress over-ready to renew the act. *It becomes imperative, therefore, that peace advocates write their legislators at once, urging the renewal of the Trade Agreements Act as it now stands.*

Neutrality

Present legislation, which expires May 1, provides for prohibitions on the export of arms, ammunition, and implements of war and on the granting of loans and credits to belligerents. With reference to further legislation, two questions arise:

1. Shall the prohibition on exports be extended to include

not only such war essentials as guns and bullets but also *supplementary materials such as oil, cotton, wheat, copper, lead, and other articles which are absolutely essential to the prosecution of war?*

2. Shall it be *mandatory upon the President to prohibit the export of such materials to all belligerents without discrimination*, or shall he be granted discretion to use his own judgment as to which belligerents, if any, shall receive war supplies from us?

It is clear that the provisions of the present act will stand unchanged in any new legislation that may be enacted. It is likely, also, that provision will be made for an embargo on the export of supplementary war materials. There is no serious difference of opinion in Washington or in the peace movement on these points.

The Point of Controversy

The struggle for adequate neutrality legislation will center in *one chief controversial issue*: shall it be mandatory upon the President to prohibit the export of war materials to all belligerents without partiality, or shall he have the power, in his discretion, to permit such exports to one group of belligerent nations.

It is reported that Senator Nye, advocate of strict mandatory legislation, will introduce a bill which provides for—

1. The extension of the present act to include an embargo on essential war materials to all belligerents;
2. An embargo on all articles declared by belligerents to be "contraband";
3. Definite withdrawal of government protection from citizens and ships that travel in war zones.

The Administration is expected to support legislation which will give the President some freedom of action, so that he may use his discretion with regard to laying down embargoes on the exports of supplementary war materials.

Industrial Mobilization Plan

The Assistant Secretary of War was authorized by the National Defense Act, 1920, to prepare a plan for the mobilization of men and of industry for the prosecution of any future war. The Army and Navy are now prepared to introduce certain legislation to give the President power to put this Industrial Mobilization Plan into action, when a war is declared.

In considering the specific legislation to be introduced we should have in mind the general plan which the War Department has evolved. In its original form (certain sections of the I.M.P. are being revised, though they have not been repudiated) it calls for—

1. The registration of the whole civilian male population between the ages of 18 and 45 and their subjection to government orders (this means: conscription);
2. The setting up of super-agencies to mobilize factory and farm for turning out war orders efficiently and at reasonable prices;
3. A virtual draft of labor—with a probable suspension of collective bargaining, strikes, and social legislation;
4. The strictest censorship of all agencies for the making of public opinion.

This plan, if put into effect, will mean a war dictatorship, fascist in spirit and possible operation. To maintain democracy, we must bend every effort to preserve peace, for such proposals as the I.M.P. will almost certainly be imposed upon the country—whether we like it or not.

The specific legislation introduced by the War Department calls for:

1. The drafting of any business executives—persons in the "management or control" of industry—who may not be willing to cooperate fully with the government in its plans for industry; such persons to be subject to the orders of the War Department;

2. The fixing of prices of war materials to prevent profiteering;
3. The regulation of commodity exchanges and the closing of securities and stock exchanges.

First, note the omissions here. Nothing about the conscription of the civilian male population. Nothing about the drafting of labor. Nothing about censorship.

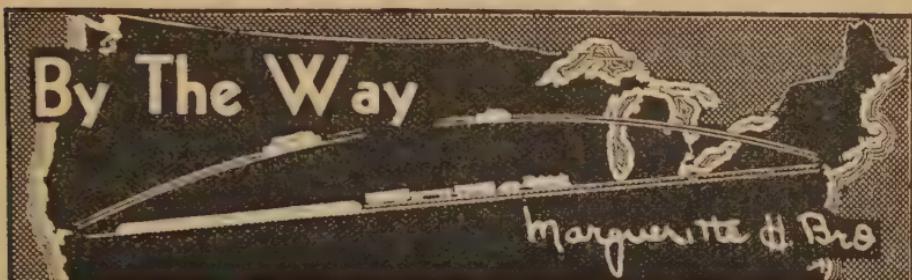
Don't Be Fooled

A word about these laws. *We should not be misled into thinking that this is real war profits legislation*, which will prevent profiteering. The I.M.P. provides for a 6 per cent profit on war orders, and the Nye committee has demonstrated the possibility of even larger profits to industrialists.

We should also not be misled into thinking that the government will really exercise its authority to conscript executives who use obstructive tactics. Industry cannot be coerced, it has to be wooed. This was true in the last war, it will be true in the next. But there is a danger that this bill has a loophole for the drafting of labor, which *can* be coerced—unless it resists in a mass. This would be a tragic blow to labor, one which workers and peace advocates alike must resist.

The Industrial Mobilization Plan envisages a war on the scale of the World War and fought outside of continental United States. We do not intend to fight another such war. Therefore we do not need the dictatorship involved in these War Department plans.

Note: We recommend that you write the PUBLIC ACTION COMMITTEE, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N. Y., or the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PREVENTION OF WAR, 532 17th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., asking that you be kept informed on peace legislation. While the CSA will keep subscribers to SOCIAL ACTION informed on peace matters, we cannot hope on our limited budget to take the place of a peace agency, nor would we want to do so.



Estelle in a fury of angry excitement was something quite new. Usually, even up here on their 'gentleman's farm,' Estelle is the best dressed woman of her set and the least perturbed by the unexpected. Today, as she burst in upon us, her hair and clothes seemed to partake of her rage.

"Do you know what's been happening on the Ivanson farm next to us? Tim Ivanson gets boys from some charity in the city on the promise that he's giving them 'a beautiful summer in the country,' and then he works them in his fields from sunrise to sunset. Every day in the week, no matter how hot. Just like slaves. *Children*, I tell you. Boys from twelve to sixteen. By night they're so tired they can't stand up straight."

She stopped for a breath and I answered. "I did see

several boys out there but I thought he had a large family."

No Law Against It

"He has. Nine children. And they work the same way. The four children in grade school missed one-sixth of their time last year because he kept them home picking potatoes, cutting wood, doing spring plowing, all sorts of things. I told him I'd get his record and I have, the brute. Two girls, twelve and fourteen, do all the washing and they do it in open tubs over washboards. One of them has a ghastly lame back from carrying water. I tell you, jail's too good for Tim Ivanson."

"Did you go to see him?"

"Did I go to see him? I just came from there. I promised him I'd have the law on him before sunset and I will."

"Which law, Estelle? Do sit down and get your breath."

She sank into the hammock. "I'll have the child labor law on him, of course."

"Not in this state."

She looked up in surprise. "Don't we have a child labor law? Not any old kind of a law at all?"

"That's exactly what we have—any old kind of a law."

Estelle frowned. "Then I'll get the United States government after him, that's what."

I frowned, too. Thirty wouldn't cover the number of times I'd tried to get Estelle interested in the child labor amendment. It seemed useless to start all over. So I merely said: "The child labor amendment to the constitution of the United States has never been ratified by this state, nor by enough of the other states to make it a law."

The Children's Amendment

Estelle sat up straight. "That's right. I believe you did tell me that. Well, it's going to be ratified now. I'm going to get right at it."

She did get at it—in a way. She worked hard and intelligently on the case of Tim Ivanson. It was comparatively

easy to do something about his overworked 'charity' guests, less easy to render a really constructive service to his children. But Estelle was all for agitating public opinion.

In the city, she talked around at woman's clubs and got out petitions and went personally to call on her representative. In the country, she was a fine influence on the neighborhood and put what she called 'the fear of God' into the hearts of some of the most ignorant.

And then, when she saw satisfactory changes in the immediate situation around her, she dropped the matter. She declined a further place on the child labor committee of the Woman's Association in her church.

One of her friends tried to press her. "There are still the children in the beet fields, Estelle, younger—some of them—than the Ivansons, working longer hours. There are still children in cotton, underfed, seldom in school. There are children in tobacco, and in the shrimp canneries, children in the cranberry marshes, in small fruits,

among the weary migrant workers. Still children in mines, children in factories, in sweatshop home industries."

"It's dreadful," said Estelle warmly. But it was plain to see that she couldn't visualize those other children. For her they did not really exist and she simply could not work for something she did not see.

Too Far Away

If it were only Estelle—but it isn't. It's most of the rest of us. *We are adolescent Christians, throwing ourselves completely into some immediate piece of injustice, but unable to see the starker injustices if they do not occur before our eyes.* "There are comparatively few intellectual

adults," say the psychologists, "able to visualize a mass situation in personal terms." Perhaps the history of the child labor amendment proves their point.

Of course, if it were *our* child picking worms off tobacco plants through endless hours, if it were *our* small nephews out on the city streets peddling newspapers until late hours of the night, if it were *our* next-door neighbor's daughters making artificial flowers for seven hours outside of school—then 'we'd do something.' Indeed, we would be amazingly inventive in thinking up ways and means. But the children in industry aren't *our* children.

They belong to 'others.'

For Your Observance Of RACE RELATIONS SUNDAY February 14

MATERIALS FOR —

The Literature Table
Adult Discussion Groups
General Distribution

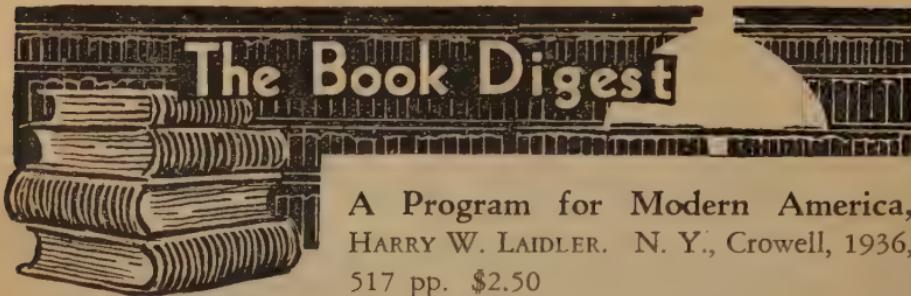
The Sermon
The Church School

The Negro, Study packet prepared by the Council for Social Action, 25c. Contains adequate resource materials: study outline, worship service, pamphlets of various sorts.

Democracy and the Negro, by Marion Cuthbert. *Social Action Pamphlet*. Single copies, 10c.; 10 or more, 7c.; 50 or more, 5c.

Program Suggestions, by the Federal Council of Churches, 5c. Contains the race relations message for 1936, data for speakers, programs for women, young people, children.

Order at once from the COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL ACTION



A Program for Modern America,
HARRY W. LAIDLER. N. Y., Crowell, 1936,
517 pp. \$2.50

Here is a program for social change. But more important, here are the materials for a program. The person who wants to blueprint the economic and political future of America will have to sit down first with facts such as are here presented.

First, the Children

Dr. Laidler begins with the children, always a good starting point. *Perhaps a civilization is ultimately to be judged by what it offers child life.* In 1930, over 235,000 boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 13 were gainfully employed, laboring for a paltry wage, and under conditions—most of them—that made a normal childhood an impossibility. There were nearly half a million between 14 and 15, and nearly a million and a half between 16 and 17. A grand total of 2,145,959.

How much this total has changed since 1930 is unknown.

"One of the most unjustifiable evils in modern life," says Dr. Laidler, "is that of child labor." *Item number one in a program for America: the federal child labor amendment.*

Social Security

Next come unemployment and health insurance, and old age pensions.

We are reminded how slow our government was in accepting the principle of unemployment insurance. In 1934 compulsory unemployment insurance existed in 10 countries in Europe, with about 50,000,000 workers covered, while in 8 other countries voluntary systems of insurance were in operation. Not until 1935 did the United States enact similar legislation.

The United States, in the matter of compulsory health insurance, ranks with China and India as one of the few major countries that have no legislation to protect the population against the hazard of sickness. As long ago as 1889 Germany passed a comprehensive national health insurance law, with Great Britain following suit in 1911. *It will amaze many to learn that in any one year less than 7 per cent of Americans have a complete or partial physical examination; that between 40 and 50 per cent of those in families with incomes of \$2,000 and less receive no medical, dental or eye care during the year.*

About one-third of all persons over 65 years of age are supported wholly or partly by others. Under the Social Security Act the federal government helps states pay pensions to the needy aged, contributing, as its share, a maximum of \$15 for each person. Pension systems are operating in 40 countries, with more than a third of the population of the world covered.

A *real* system of social insurance, says Dr. Laidler, still lies before us as a major task. *Item number two in a program for America calls for: adequate social insurance, providing security against unemployment, sickness and old age.* Dr. Laidler urges our consideration of the more liberal Frazier-Lundeen unemployment insurance bill, the passage of legislation to establish health insurance, and the enactment of an enabling amendment to give Congress affirmative power to legislate adequately in this field.

For the Workers

A shorter work week is also set before us as a desirable goal. From 1919 to 1932 the productivity per man hour so increased in our manufacturing industries that a man in the latter year could produce in a 4½-hour day as much as his predecessor could have produced in 1919 in an 8-hour day. But labor-saving machinery has not greatly shortened man's hours of labor. Unless we reduce hours, says Dr. Laidler, we shall continue

to suffer technological unemployment. *Item number three: the 30-hour work week.*

Labor must not only be protected in its civil rights, but should be encouraged to organize. Today only 10 to 15 per cent of the organizable workers are members of trade unions. The remainder are unorganized or are in company unions, where they have no real power to bargain collectively. *Item number four: the thorough organization of the workers into genuine trade unions, with the right to bargain collectively protected.*

The Rest of the Program

Dr. Laidler goes right down the list. Other items include: a long-range system of *public works* to absorb the unemployed in hard times; a *federal housing program* to provide low-cost dwellings for the poor; the *social ownership of our natural resources, of public utilities and banks*; a constructive agricultural program; a tax system based on ability to pay; the preservation and extension of *civil liberties*; a

more enlightened and adequate constitution; an international policy that will insure *world peace*; and a political realignment that will give the masses of the people an adequate share in the control of their political life.

In Place of Profit

Dr. Laidler is a socialist. It will not be surprising, therefore, that he should advocate social planning. He would replace the competitive capitalistic order with a planned economy. He believes that only as the concrete proposals which he makes in this book are supplemented by and founded upon the abolition of the profit motive, can Americans find the life abundant.

His book, however, is decidedly not a political tract. It is a handbook of economic facts, not to be ignored by radicals, nor blinked at by conservatives. Anyone who sits down to figure out what must be done next in this country will have to square his suggestions with the material that Dr. Laidler has here assembled.

Readings on Child Welfare

Young Child in the Home, by the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. Appleton, 1936, 415 pp., \$3.00

A survey of the life and environment of young children in 3,000 American homes.

Why Keep Them Alive, by Paul K. De Kruif. Harcourt, 1936, 293 pp., \$3.00.

"The author voices a vigorous protest against the economic system that allows children to starve in the midst of plenty and nullifies the achievements of science that might keep them free from disease."—Book Review Digest.

The Family Encounters the Depression, by R. C. Angell. Scribner, 1936, 309 pp., \$1.50.

Case studies of a selected group of families. Useful in interpreting the relation between personal adjustments and the pressure of circumstance. These families remained above the level of misery into which so many American families have been plunged.

\$2500 a Year, by M. Ezekiel. Harcourt, 1936, 328 pp., \$2.50
Presents arguments showing the desirability and the possibility of so planning industrial affairs as to give to each workingman's family a minimum income of \$2,500 a year.

The Fate of the Family, by Arthur E. Holt. Willett, Clark, 1936, \$2.00.

The chief questions considered are: To what extent is the American marriage a failure? How can it be made a success?

STUDY PACKETS, by the Council for Social Action. 1936. 25c.

Child Labor: Contains study outline, worship service, resource material such as *Child Labor Facts and Figures* from the Federal Childrens' Bureau; the *Handbook of the Federal Child Labor Amendment*, as well as maps and reprints.

Social Security: The revised edition brings the Social Security material up-to-date. The study outline has been rewritten and ample and interesting factual material included.

LEAFLETS, by the Federal Children's Bureau. Washington, Free.

Child Labor, *The Crippled Child*, *Security for Children*, *Social Services for Children*.

The Children's Charter

For every child—

Spiritual and moral training to help him to stand firm under the pressure of life

A home and that love and security which a home provides

Health protection from birth through adolescence

A dwelling place safe, sanitary, and wholesome, with reasonable provisions for privacy

A school which is safe from hazards, sanitary, properly equipped, lighted, and ventilated

A community which recognizes and plans for his needs, protects him against physical dangers, moral hazards, and disease, provides him with safe and wholesome places for play and recreation, and makes provisions for his social and cultural needs

An education which, through the discovery and development of his individual abilities, prepares him for life

Protection against labor that stunts growth, either physical or mental, that limits education, that deprives children of the right of comradeship, of play and of joy

The right to grow up in a family with an adequate standard of living and the security of a stable income as the surest safeguard against social handicaps.

—Adopted from the WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE
ON CHILD HEALTH AND PROTECTION